

DAY WITH WASHINGTON'S "HONOR" CONVICTS

Day Book Correspondent Tells What He Saw and Heard at the "Honor" Camp Where Felons From the State Penitentiary Are Allowed to Work Without Armed Guards Standing Over Them.

By Fred L. Boalt.

Hoodsport, Hood's Canal, Wash., Oct. 14.—Thirty-two men are making a road from Hoodsport to Lilliwaup, five miles along the west shore of the canal.

Thirty of the 32 are convicts recently brought here from the penitentiary at Walla Walla. One is a highwayman, one a horse thief, five are forgers and the rest convicted of robbery and grand larceny. Nine are "second timers."

The two who are not convicts are Frank Randolph, superintendent, and L. D. Packard, engineer.

When night comes the convicts leave their work and troop to the "honor camp."

"Goodnight, boys," calls Randolph.

"Goodnight, sir."

And Randolph and Packard go the other way!

"It's a kind of game," said Randolph, as together we stood and watched the last of the construction gang disappear.

"If I had a rifle those men would be constantly on the lookout to make a getaway. They would scurry into the bush like rabbits. Why not? Over that hill—and Randolph's arm made a sweep—"is a wilderness as big as the state of Ohio. Once a man has entered it he could hide out for months. But they won't do it."

"They know when they are well off," I said. "After cells at Walla Walla and the jute mill, shut in by walls, this life in the open and 50 cents a day, and the prospect of a pardon—"

"You don't understand," inter-

rupted Randolph. "It isn't the freedom, the money or the prospect of a pardon. It's honor. . . . Oh, I know; society sneers when you talk of 'honor' in convicts. The men of this 'honor' squad weren't picked for their morals. Nevertheless, I trust them. I never visit them at night unless invited. Night or day, I am never armed. There isn't a gun within a mile of the job."

"What are they doing now?" I asked.

"I don't know," Randolph replied. "It's none of my business. You might go and find out."

So, through the gathering dusk, I tramped to where lights of the "honor" camp blinked.

Another man, coming down the valley, met me at the door of a tent and we entered together. He was a "con." A bucket filled with blackberries dangled from the crook of his arm. His entrance was the signal for a joyous uproar, and a jovial fellow, who, when free, is a burglar, hollered:

"Hey, cook! Blackberry pie tomorrow!"

"Sure! Like mother used to make."

They smoked, talked and played cards. They turned in when the felt like it. Two went to town to buy tobacco; the rest were too tired, for the work is hard.

The talk turned to getaways, and the horse thief said: "It would be dead easy. I promised I wouldn't try to get away, and I ain't going to. 'Twouldn't be right."

Daybreak found me on the Hoods-